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BOTANY IN ENGLAND.¹

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THE period of twenty-five years that has elapsed since the British Association last met in this city all but includes the rise of modern botany in this country. During the middle decades of last century our botanists were preoccupied with arranging and describing the countless collections of new plants that poured in from every quarter of an expanding empire. The methods inculcated by Linnæus and the other great taxonomists of the eighteenth century had taken deep root with us and choked out all other influences. Schleiden's 'Principles of Botany,' which marked a great awakening elsewhere, failed to arouse us. The great results of Von Mohl, Hofmeister, Nägeli and so many other notable workers, which practically transformed botany, were at first without visible effect.

It was not that we were lacking in men capable of appreciating the newer work. Henfrey, Dr. Lankester (the father of our president), not to mention others, were continually bringing these results before societies, writing about them in the journals, and translating books. But the thing never caught on—it would have been surprising if it had. You may write and talk to your contemporaries to your heart's content, and leave no lasting impression. The

¹Concluding part of the opening address of Professor F. W. Oliver, F.R.S., president of the Section of Botany, at the York meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.